

MilAtari Limited Edition

Vol. VIII, No. V
May 1989

This Month: General Meeting

Sat., May 20th 12:00 Noon
Greenfield Park Lutheran Church
1236 S. 115th St., West Allis

Exec. Board Meeting

Sun., May 21st, 7:30pm
Pepino's, 9909 W. Appleton Ave.

Next Month: General Meeting

Sat., June 24th, 12:00 Noon
Greenfield Park Lutheran Church
1236 S. 115th St., West Allis

Inside:

May Meeting Highlight	2
X-Press	3
MilAtari Meeting Schedule	3
Editor Resigns.....	3
Software Morality	4
Custom Fit Word Processing	5
Ribbon Resurrection	8
ST PD Listings	9
8-Bit PD Listing.....	11
SIG News	11

Michelle Gross

From The President

First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing officers; Bruce Welsch and Carl Verbanac. On behalf of the entire MilAtari membership, we offer our gratitude for your past support of this group.

I am pleased to report the results of my first official action as your newly elected President, that being appointments to the board. The following faces you have come to know and appreciate will remain in their appointed positions: Dennis Wilson as our ST Librarian, Bob Marsolek as our 8-Bit Librarian, Lee Musial will keep up his excellent job as our Copyright Librarian, Rich Dankert as our SysOp, and Dick Laudenbach will continue to be our Public Relations Officer.

The newest addition to our board is Ed Newman, who is now our Cashier. My personal thanks to all of you, and I look forward to working with you in the year ahead. As of the writing of this article the Publications Librarian position has not been filled, so anyone with an interest in serving the membership in this capacity, please telephone me, leave a message in Mail on the BBS, or see me at the upcoming meeting.

I am sorry to relay a bit of unfortunate news to you as well in this first report to the membership, that being the resignation of Jim Morales, our well-respected Editor. I am confident that I speak for the entire membership in thanking him for the tremendous job he has done not only as Editor, but as an active and dedicated member of this volunteer corporation. In order to continue this ever important service to you, we will need a volunteer to take over Jim's past duties.

I view this as an excellent opportunity for someone interested in Desktop Publishing to learn this fine art via club resources. I believe that Jim will be the first to confirm what potential there is for experience and education in this area by taking on this duty. Again, if you are interested, let me know asap.

Another note of thanks goes from myself to Dr. Armin Baier who has made a suggestion box, at my request, which will be at the May meeting, and every meeting from now on, for your use. This is your chance to anonymously provide your ideas, comments, criticisms, and observations to this board. Any and all suggestions will be welcomed!

Finally, I want to affirm my dedication to the members of this club in stating that as your elected representative, I am committed to serving you to the best of my ability. It is my personal belief that most of us joined this club primarily for the hope of learning how to use these powerful tools we have to their fullest capability.

That is the direction I intend to take in this next year. Judging from the response to the Word Writer Workshop, as well as the support many of the members have personally offered me in the past months, I believe this is what the members want, and together we can make this goal a reality.

Michelle Gross
President, MilAtari Ltd.

MilAtari Ltd.
The Milwaukee Area
Atari Users Group
Post Office Box 14038
West Allis, WI 53214

Membership in MilAtari Ltd. is open to all individuals and families interested in personal computing. Annual dues are \$20.00 for individuals, \$25.00 per family and includes a one year subscription to this newsletter and access to club libraries. Membership applications may be obtained at the monthly meeting or by writing to the club Secretary at the above address.

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For information on placing camera-ready, pre-paid ads, please write to the Newsletter Editor at the above address. All other inquiries should be addressed to the group Secretary.

All you've ever wanted to know about

SPRING CLEANING

Terry Kraus, of Micro Magic will speak to us at this month's General meeting on the proper care and cleaning methods of computer equipment.

Topics will include:

Use of Dust Covers

Drive Cleaning Products - Should I or shouldn't I?

How and how often to clean equipment

How to recognize hardware failure

Question and answer period

Don't miss it! May 20th, after a brief business meeting

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Bill Selle

X-PRESS: Your World Connection

Last month, subscribers to Jones Intercable in Milwaukee received a small, 3-color pamphlet in their monthly statement. This pamphlet announced a new service available to subscribers called; "X-Press" that offers two packages to information-hungry PC owners, including Atari ST users!!

The "X-Change" package consists of a weighty batch of data designed to keep you up to date in a variety of topics. Stock quotes through Standard & Poor's allow for rapid referencing of market standings in all major exchanges in America, with updates three times a day. There's access to worldwide newswires, including; AP, TASS (USSR), and OPEC with no censoring or editing. Sports scores, weather reports, general news and information are all rapidly and easily accessed.

The "Executive" package provides continuous monitoring of Standard & Poor's stock quotations, as well as highlighting up to 128 ticker symbols for a customized portfolio report. Updates on stock statistics, commodities, precious metals, cur-

rency rates, mergers and acquisitions, and corporate press releases can be accessed for a constant flow of information. It's almost like a computerized combination of CNN and The Wall Street Journal!

Both packages require a basic cable hookup, but normal cable TV is not affected. The packages can also search for "key words" in the news stories, and save them for later review or tracking.

The "X-Change" hit costs \$125 and doesn't require a monthly fee. The "Executive" kit costs \$225 plus a \$19.95 per month subscription fee.

For more information (including ordering), contact:

X-Press
P.O. Box 4153
Englewood, CO 80155
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If this type of direct access to the world and Wall Street interests you, then this is your opportunity to get with the program (the X-Press program, that is!).

* * *

Editor Boogies!

(Franklin, WI) In a thinly veiled attempt to get out of doing more work, MilAtari Ltd. Newsletter Editor, Jim Morales, has resigned, effective with this issue. Sources close to the action were quick to acknowledge the departure.

In a carefully prepared statement, Morales, his voice choked with emotion, said; "There's only so many hours in the day, and my new position is going to keep me very busy. So busy, that I could not possibly devote the amount of time necessary to the newsletter."

Morales' new position, as Co-SysOp of the Soft Logik Customer Support Area on GENie, the General Electric Information Service, will involve assisting customers with their use of Soft Logik's new Desktop Publishing program: PageStream.

"PageStream represents a quantum leap in the area of ST desktop publishing," Morales said. "It moves the ST into the realm of real-world DTP applications, and being asked to help others like myself master its capabilities is an honor and a privilege."

Morales was quick to thank the membership of MilAtari Ltd. for their help and support. "I have indeed been fortunate to work with so many people who are deeply devoted to furthering their knowledge of the Atari computer line", he said. "My experiences as Editor have enriched my life immeasurably, and I owe the entire organization a great deal. They all have my most heartfelt thanks."

No replacement editor has yet been named, and MilAtari President, Michelle Gross, has asked all interested parties to contact her directly. Mr. Morales indicated that he would provide any help possible in the transition.

* * *

MilAtari Ltd. 1989 Meeting Schedule

General Meeting	Comments	Board Meeting
May 20		May 21
June 24		June 25
July 15		July 23
August 10-13	GENCON '89	
August 19	Picnic	August 27
September 16		September 24
October 21		October 29
November 25		December 3
December 16	Christmas Party	January 7, 1990

Bob Carpenter

The Ethics of Importing Compilations from Europe

We have heard much about great software from Europe, specifically England and Germany. From my cursory reading of European magazines, the roads aren't "paved with gold", but there's some nice software (especially of the game variety) that isn't available here in America.

To try to bridge the gap, importers have cropped up to fill the demand for European software here. I see nothing wrong with this; it just makes relatively recent European releases available here in the States. For 99% of the releases, this presents no problem. For instance, I bought *Arkanoid II* a while back from my local software store which carries European imports. The problem comes with the software compilations that are available in Europe, and are imported to the US.

First of all, you should know before I start, that I own such a compilation myself. It is called *Arcade Force Four* and is sold by an English firm, US Gold.

Compilations are used by a manufacturer to get more sales out of aging products. The manufacturer puts three or four games together and sells them for the price of one. The logic behind this is that they would rather get some money for these older titles instead of writing them off.

This is exactly what happened in Europe last Christmas. A flood of compilations, like *Arcade Force Four*, came out because the programs were out of date in the rapidly changing European ST market. It really does change fast over there. I read a complaint in one of the European magazines (*ST Action*, an ST-only games magazine) that the magazine was

only reviewing 25 games a month! I don't know about you, but I'd love to see a magazine review 25 games per month, with the reviews not being for games that were over a year old! But, as I was saying, the compilations were released. No real problem over there because the programs in question had been out for about two to three years.

But over here, these same programs were relatively new to the ST market, and were still commanding full retail price. Some of the programs in question are: *Gauntlet*, *Road Runner*, *Indiana Jones & The Temple of Doom*, and *Epyx's Death Sword*. These are games that run from \$19.95 to \$49.95 in America. The first three games are imported by Mindscape for distribution in America. Even mail order, those games cost about \$32.50 each. I bought the aforementioned games plus *Metrocross*, in a compilation, for \$33.25, including shipping, from an European importer!

Before there's a sudden rush to buy these games at bargain basement prices, let me point out some of the pitfalls. First of all, in the agreement with US Gold, I'm sure that Mindscape has to give a certain percentage of the amount grossed on the three games to US Gold, and that the amount that Mindscape can charge for the game is fixed. For that reason, they can't compete with the compilations on the basis of price.

You may be thinking, "Why should I care how much a company's profit margin is? I'm not pirating the program!" In answer to that; No, you're not pirating the program, but you could very well be cutting your own (and everybody else's) throat. Not everyone is able, or willing, to deal with importers to get the soft-

ware that they want. Also, if Mindscape gets burned on this too badly, they may well decide to stop importing from Europe entirely and one of our few lifelines to Europe would be severed.

Before this becomes too depressing an outlook, let me say that this problem, while it is here now, could very well fade into the sunset very quickly. For one thing, Mindscape has been importing much newer games from Europe recently (i.e. *Outrun*, *Afterburner*). If people like Mindscape import more recent titles from Europe, then the incentive to import compilations isn't there because the programs are the same price (or close to it) in both countries.

The only advantages to importing are acquiring programs unavailable here, and the opportunity to save money. In Europe, except for the logjam of compilations at Christmas, there haven't been any new ones. However, the problem is there. I read an ad in a European magazine where *Defender of the Crown* was in one compilation! Also I saw an ad where *Tetris* was being sold for 4.95 pounds (about \$10). For Pete's sake, *Tetris* just came over to America a couple of months back for the ST!

As I told you before, I can't get too high on my soapbox because I bought one myself. Ideally, if enough people bought compilations, the American companies would be forced into more recent acquisitions. However, it won't work that way and I know that. The problem is that it takes time to sign agreements to import software from Europe to America. Also, if the American companies lose too much business, they would be likely to say, "Well, the ST market isn't that profitable anyway, so why don't we just ditch it like everyone else has?"

Then again, once Atari starts advertising in a big way, there may enough of an ST market for American companies to take notice of. Stay tuned...

Michael Easter

Custom-Fit Word Processing

Reprinted with the author's permission from an article posted on GENie, The General Electric Information Service.

The current interest in desktop publishing has led us to a greater appreciation for the concepts of page design, readability, balance, white spaces and page composition. It's no wonder that we look at our pages with default margins and find ourselves wondering how we could have organized our page better.

Here are some hints about how you can incorporate some of those principles into your favorite word processor. I will use the examples of WordWriter and STWriter because they are a popular programs and lend themselves to some of the principles described, but any number of word processors can embrace these techniques.

Let's start off with a letter to someone. Most of us just open our word processing program, give this document a name, and compose our letter. Then we look back through it, correct our spelling, grammar, and composition, and conclude that we are through, and print that beauty. Only after we apply a critical eye to the finished product do we find ourselves carefully examining how this page really looks, and by then it's a lot simpler to accept a sub-optimal page layout than it is to start "reconstructing" the document to be more pleasing to the eye. Besides, our default settings have taken into account some of the principles involved in page layout.

For example, we usually have our configurations to provide pica type, 65 space lines, and usually produce top, left, and right margins of about an inch, and whatever ends up at the bottom for that margin. See note 1. Commonly, we end up with an undesirable distribution between

top and bottom margins, because our document doesn't "fit the page". Here's how we remedy that, and how we deal with problems like our document spilling over onto the next page, with an even less desirable maldistribution of space.

Not being a wasteful person, it seems pretty silly to me to print out a page before I realize how it's going to look. Our word processors have various ways to provide you with WYSIWYG or, at the very least, some method of page preview. Hold off on printout until you have taken a view of what the output will be. Once you have done so, you will discover that your document rarely fits the page ideally using the default settings.

Short Letter

There's going to be way too much space at the bottom of the letter. Why not expand your margins to some reasonable degree, say, over an inch, by making a 60 space line, reformatting, changing your page layout, and taking a look at what you have? See note 2. A large bottom margin will look much better with these enlarged top, left, and right margins. Generally, a significant bottom margin will still look better than further expansion of this concept to even larger margins, using a 55 space line. See note 3. Margins of that size may not be appealing to some, but some of the intermediates between 55 and 60 space lines may be more desirable.

Longer letter

Oops! We spilled over onto the next page. Now things really start looking badly distributed. This is a little more fun, and one of the principle reasons that I thought I would share some ideas with you. Let's trim our top margin and make a 70 space

line. Sometimes, that's just enough to do it. See note 4. Didn't make it? Further trimming of margins is going to have a bad effect. Let's take a different tack.

Suppose we had 72 lines per page instead of 66, would that do it? If so, that's a good solution, and one that our printer is perfectly capable of. What we need is a way to tell our printer that, instead of having a line feed be 1/6 inch (or 12/72"), we want the line feed to be 11/72". See note 4.1. This spacing of lines looks just fine, and our printers are perfectly capable of doing that. Preparing a printer configuration of this type is what this is all about.

In the case of WordWriter, the key to this maneuver lies in the printer configuration file. We have all already taken our printers configuration file (haven't we?) and renamed it to PRINTER.CFG, and that's what loads when WordWriter loads. If we go back to the install program, we can make another cfg file, and this time, in the initialization string, we can enter the necessary commands to create 11/72" line feeds, found in your printer manual. See note 5. After making this new cfg file, we save it as something, like 72PERPAG.CFG (my cfg files have more complex names, because there are a bunch of them, and they have combined or complex duties). See note 5.1.

If we have such a file, whenever we run into this little problem, we go to our page layout, change the default page length setting to 72, and see how that fits. If we like it, we use our select printer, select our 72PERPAG.CFG, and the printer outputs 72 lines per page.

In the case of STWriter, this technique is not applied to the configuration (.DAT) file, but at the top of our document with a printer control. See note 6. Also, in the case of STWriter, we should change our page length code so our preview (and printout) will work properly.

This technique can also be used

for 1/8" line spacing, but that's a little crowded for "ordinary" work; more on that later.

Let's say that 72 lines per page didn't work out; our page was still a little too long. What now? Maybe we need more characters per line. Our printers will do elite type just fine, and that will give us 12 characters per inch. Under these conditions, with approximately the same margins as described above for the 70 space line, we get an 84 space line. Using both elite type and 72 line pages gives us room for 30% more characters on the same printing space. See note 7.

In the case of WordWriter, the best approach is to create another cfg file. Similar to the above, we use our initialization string to provide access to elite type. The string can be used to do more than one thing, that is, it can make both 72 char per page and elite type. See note 8. So we actually need a 72_PICA.CFG, and a 72_ELITE.CFG. In WW, we change our ruler to 84, reformat, and see where we are.

In the case of STWriter, selecting elite at the time of printout is easy. The line length is, of course, set by our margins ^L and ^R.

For purposes of letters, we have probably reached the wall here. Elite looks just fine. 11/72" line spacing looks just fine. An 80 character line would look better than 84. See note 9. If we are still spilling over at that stage, we should have a two page letter that will look just fine with our original short letter set up, 65 space lines, pica type, 66 lines per page, and 1.0 inch top, left, and right margins. You might even want to increase the margins a tad and fill two pages perfectly.

Other Documents

With other documents, usually we are interested in getting as much on each page as possible. When we have multiple page documents, it is an advantage to have more information per page, because we can "scan"

a page and therefore more data more quickly. This type of need lets us begin to use more efficient printing routines. One that is very good is pica compressed. This is a very readable print, and prints out about 17 characters per inch, or 136 characters per line. See note 10.

Now, we're talking about some line length. Since we're printing this, we must want it to be readable. Two columns is going to be more readable than lines that long, even though 2 columns do waste a little more space on each line. This type document needs minimal margins, and although I usually provide something more than the 0.25 "built in", you don't really need to. If you minimize the left and right margins, you can have column widths of 63 characters or greater. The issue of margins here depends on whether you are "presenting" the data, or using it for yourself. See note 11.

Since 72 lines per page looks fine, there's really no reason not to use it whenever you use pica compressed. Efficiency and readability are the key.

Now, we have a little problem with 2 columns and WW. I propose two different workarounds, take your choice.

The first workaround I refer to as reprinting, and involves printing the odd numbered pages with the normal left margin, and then reprinting the same pages (after rewinding or reloading) with the even numbered pages, with the left margin set for the margin of the right column. This actually works quite well for short documents, say, 3 or less 2 column pages. See note 12. I also use reprinting techniques with STWriter for creating documents with 3 or 4 columns, as in lists with short lines.

The second workaround involves saving as ASCII, loading into STWriter, and using its 2 column printout for the product. This is usually used for documents of 3 or more 2 column pages. See note 13. If we have made some STW templates

which contain the necessary information for our 2 column printout, it can be inserted at the top line to save re-creating this information each time it's wanted. See note 14.

External documents

The other need we have for our printouts comes from files we have obtained elsewhere. These may be doc files, readme files, text files downloaded from GENie, whatever. Often we need some more tools for these. They are usually in ascii, and formatted according to their author's preference. If they _need_ to be printed out (see note 14.1), I use one of two main approaches.

Although I might read a document in Flash first, I want to use something with a little more power than its editor because of my need to reformat and to see what my reformatting is going to give me. One technique is to get the file into WW. WordWriter doesn't handle reformatting of imported ascii files well at all, as the file isn't really converted to WW format when it imports. Fortunately, there's a great little utility that will function as prg or acc called Translator that will quickly scoot the ascii file into WW format. See note 15. Then, all you have to do is load it into WW and proceed as above.

The other alternative that works equally well for examining various formats is to strip the returns, load it into STWriter, choose a format, preview, adjust format, and print. See note 15 again. By having stripped the returns, once it is in STWriter, all you have to do is trade formatting lines (see note 14 again), and STW reformats "on the fly".

Which of these approaches is easier depends on whether you can guess the ultimate format on the basis of the file size. If you are going to need much trial and error to arrive at the desired format, translate it into WW, format it in WW, export it as ascii, import it into STW if it needs 2 columns and is long, otherwise just print it with WW. If you can guess how it's going to be for-

matted, strip its returns, load it into STW, pick the correct format the first or second time, preview it, and print it out.

If you don't believe in any of this stuff, just print it out from Flash or DCopy in the first place.

Before I go, I promised to mention 8 lines per inch. Okay, here's the deal. If you just need to get a bunch of stuff on a page, that is able to be read, not necessarily enjoyably, like some kind of lengthy document that needs to be read and signed, but doesn't have to have an appealing appearance, you might take advantage of these principles. First, you have available elite compressed, at 20 characters per inch. Second, you have available 8 lines per inch, which reduces the space between lines significantly. Third, don't bother with two columns or margins here, with the possible exception of a line at the top and bottom; after all, we're going for maximum characters per page, not appearance. This should give us 86 lines of 160 characters per line. This is about 400% more than our customary 1 inch margin pica etc.

I haven't really tried to max out this game to its limit, but, you could print in subscript (or superscript) in compressed elite, and use line spacing of 7/72", giving a little over 113 lines per page, and the characters shouldn't touch. I have seen those characters, and they are quite readable, and probably fulfill the criteria for a legal document. They're much easier to read than many food labels, even when printed on a 9 pin dot matrix.

Notes

1. Pica provides 10 characters per inch, the printers default setting is 6 lines per inch, or 66 lines per page. The loading of the paper in the printer and the printer's limitations result in 0.25" margins the printer cannot reach. A 65 space line with an 8 space left margin results in 1.05 inch left margin (0.80 + 0.25) and a 0.95 inch (or greater) right

margin (8.50 - 6.50 - 1.05).

2. In pica, a 60 space line with a 10 space left margin will provide a 1.25 inch left and a 1.25 right margin. A 9 line top margin would be 1.5 inches.

3. The limits of this concept are probably in the neighborhood of a 2.0 inch top margin, a 55 space line with a 12 space left margin, resulting in 1.45" and 1.55" left and right margins, resp.

4. The limits of the narrow margin idea may be somewhere in the neighborhood of top 0.67" (4 lines), 70 space line with 5 space left margin, making 0.75" left, 0.75" right margins.

4.1. Although 11/72" may sound like an odd size, there are several good things about it. 1) it's available as an option. 2) it looks fine, as good or better than 1/6". 3) it "comes out even" when the page is over, that is, there are exactly 72 11/72" lines on a page 11" long. No other choice of line spacing will do that. There aren't even any good choices for printer controls of x over 216 or 144, except for those that correspond to 11/72.

5. In WW, in the codes menu, under initialization, you are provided with an opportunity to: Start ,.....etc., and End ,.....etc. In the case of Epson printers, initializing for 11/72" line feeds would be 27,65,11; and ending would be 27,50. The latter command restores 6 lines per inch.

5.1 I also use my configuration files to set up special (sometimes multiple strings) duties for the light print mode, and with one of my printers, I use an alternate cfg file to give me LQ print, since I don't use a control panel.

6. The printer controls in STWriter's document are done with ^O (control-O) preceding each segment of the control string, and each segment is followed by a space; ^O27 ^O65 ^O11 (this is not documented well, but it works). In STW we change

the page length with the control-Y command, from 132 (66 lines/page) to 144 (72 lines/page).

7. In the case of the 70 space line with a 4 line (0.67") top and bottom margin and 66 line pages, we have 58 such lines. In the case of the 84 space line with a 5 line (0.76") top, and 4 line (0.61") bottom and 72 line pages, we have 63 such lines. 58 x 70 vs 63 x 84, 30% more characters.

8. Making an initialization string to do more than one thing just involves stringing the strings. In the case of Epson printers our start string for 72 lines per page and elite type would be: Esc A 11, esc M; our end string would be: esc P, esc 2; or Start: 27, 65, 11, 27, 77 and end: 27, 80, 27, 50. Sometimes it makes a difference what order you perform your strings. If you have concocted a combination you like, and your program and printer won't cooperate, change the order of the strings. That is, perform 27, 77 first, and then 27, 65, 11 next. I don't know why this is, and I haven't worked out a set of guidelines for predicting problems. There is no combination of 3 strings, including those for bold, italics, underlining, all the print types, including 15 CPI (on my Fujitsu, a nice character width) and all the line spacings mentioned here, that I haven't been able to combine by trial and error. They usually work the first time.

9. An 84 character line is not excessively long to read. 55 characters are supposed to be an ideal line length, but I don't agree. 80 character elite lines provide 0.92" left and right margins, nearly an inch.

10. Printers vary in their treatment of elite, 16.7, 17.0 and 17.1 characters per inch (or 132, 136, or 137 characters per 8 inch printpage width).

11. 63 character lines with a 4 space break between columns provide for 0.37" left and 0.31" right paper margins. If one desired larger mar-

gins, a 60 character line with the 4 space break would provide 0.60" left and right margins. Very little space is needed between columns, and 4 spaces is plenty. If you like margins close to an inch use 55 space lines, 4 space break, making 0.90" left and right margins.

12. If you created your own document in WW, you probably used 65 space lines, for ease of drafting and correcting. Use 72 lines per page in the page layout and see how many pages. If it is only slightly over an even number, shrink the top and bottom margins a little. If that doesn't do it, go back to 66 lines per page, restore adequate top and bottom margins, and reformat to 60 space (or less) lines. The purpose of this "expansion" is to provide a right column, as the page with only a left column looks a little weird. Ideally, your document as described should end on an even page. If you're not having any luck, you should have used single column elite.

13. Of course, the problem with saving as ascii is the loss of bold, italic, and underlining. However, usually these are not extensive, and STWriter may be used to restore them prior to printout. The advantage of WW is the facility with which you can see how many extra lines are on an "extraneous" page.

14. It is handy to create some STWriter "templates" using all the math necessary to create nicely laid out documents in a variety of forms, pica, elite, pica compressed, and even elite compressed for some limited applications. Each type may have several different margin settings, and each of those may have an alternate for 72 lines per page (or even 88 lines per page) with the file containing control codes for the printer and the page. This spares having to tinker with the format line as much while you are optimizing the output appearance. I have about 20, their names reflecting their duties, and keep them in a folder, and make new ones all the

time.

14.1 Think about printing before you do it, or you'll end up with vast piles of documents that are often hard to find. If you inhibit your printing reflex, you will be attentive about the document when you read it, and just file the disk version where it can be found if you need it. The only thing that needs to be printed is what you need to refer to while your computer is tied up in such a way you can't examine a document. Now that DCopy is available as an accessory, that should be rare.

15. Utilities for stripping returns include Elvert (which can also produce a WW format from ascii) and DCopy. DCopy has the advantage of allowing viewing of the result, and is an excellent way to read the file in the first place, to say nothing of providing a speedy de-arc, which is often the original form.

Just for the record, if one were going to reformat and print this document, you would reformat it with 2 55 characters per line columns, 66 lines per page, pica compressed, allowing 1 inch top and 0.83" bottom margins, 0.90" left and right margins, 4 spaces intercolumnar, and it would end 2 lines from the bottom of the second page, printed front and back. If it hadn't worked out that way, tiny adjustments could have put it right there.

* * *

[Editor's note: Thanks on behalf of the entire group for Mr. Easter's generous permission in allowing us to reprint his article. Most of you know how I feel about reprints, but this is, without question, the finest article I have seen on this subject. Inasmuch as AtariWriter functions very similarly to STWriter, many of these tips apply equally to the 8-Bit and ST. Ed.]

* * *

Get Longer Wear From Your Panasonic Printer Ribbons!

Here is what I hope may be a help to those of us who have a Panasonic printer, and who do a lot of graphics or letter writing. Graphics are especially rough on printer ribbons. When the ribbon begins to print light, and having already pressed in the silver tab on the cartridge, I have found that one can extend the life of the ribbon by opening the case and adding 1/4 teaspoon of WD-40 to the re-inking wheel.

I have done this several times with good success. This even seems to help clean the pins on the print head, and lubricate them at the same time.

When the ribbon becomes worn, a small shim can be placed under the cartridge to lift the ribbon. This provides a different "strike zone," again extending the life of the ribbon. I believe caution is advised here to keep the "lift" to minimum so as not to put undue pressure on the drive wheel.

I have been doing this for over a year now without any bad effects. If anyone knows of a reason not to do this, please, let's hear about it.

-Rich Tanin

* * *

[Editor's note: The above falls in to the category of "Do At Your Own Risk." As the owner of a Panasonic printer, I can see how the above can extend the life of the ribbon, but frankly, the notion of applying something like WD-40 inside the ribbon cartridge worries me. I don't know why it worries me, it just does.

The bottom line is: Use caution, and proceed slowly. If it works for you, great, especially if it saves you a few bucks. Just be advised that this is not an "officially sanctioned" procedure. Ed.]

Dennis Wilson

ST PD Update

MilAtari Ltd. ST Public Domain Library Disks are available to members at a price of \$3.50 per disk, and to non-members at \$5 per disk. The charge for the disks covers the cost of the media and handling, with all proceeds going to support the activities of MilAtari Ltd.

Some of the programs on these disks have been released as shareware and are so documented in the programs themselves. MilAtari Ltd. supports the shareware concept and you are encouraged to make donations to the individual authors should you find their programs useful.

The MilAtari PD Libraries are intended to provide a repository for useful and interesting programs, and each file is tested before inclusion on the disk. We believe that each file is worthy of your consideration. No warranty is expressed nor implied, however, as to their content or usability. Defective disks will be gladly replaced. These disks are made available for sale at the monthly club meeting and may be ordered in advance by posting a message in the Library Lounge room on the club BBS.

DISK 206 - BOOT DISK COMPANION VI

A selection of accessories and programs for the AUTO folder on your boot disk. The disk is meant to be a companion to the MilAtari Desktop Disk (Disk 100), with additional programs for that disk if you wish to have a double-sided boot disk. This disk is a standalone, ready-to-run disk, however, with all programs designed for an AUTO folder located in such a folder on this disk.

ARCITSHL: A folder containing ARCIT.TTP, ARCITSHL, DEARCIT, and UNARCIT, and their associated documentation files. ARCIT is a utility which enables you to ARC or unARC entire disks, including folders. It does not have to be in the same folder as the ARC file. ARCITSHL is the GEM graphics interface for ARCIT.TTP. DEARCIT and UNARCIT both dearc all ARC files in a directory, placing the files from each in a folder. They have slightly different features. The author claims that these programs run faster than other ARCing programs because they were written in C rather than compiled Basic.

CFORMAT: Michtron Disk Format - A formatting program which lets you vary more than just the number of tracks and sectors. Among other things, you can set the step rate, the number of FAT's or FAT sectors, and whether an IBM boot sector is written.

DCOPY312: One of the finest utilities around, particularly in the area of ARCing, has been made finer with 33 changes which the author lists in the documentation file. In addition, a shell program, DCOPYSHL, is included which gives a GEM

interface to the program. Now many of the functions can be used through drop down menus. Accessories, such as the Universal Item Selector II, can now be accessed.

DELETER: Tired of continuously having to delete all those .BAK files Word Writer leaves on your disks? This program searches a disk or hard drive partition, and deletes all the .BAK files, including those it finds in folders.

FRUTILITY: File Restore Utility - A program which will restore or copy complete folders with associated files and subfolders from one disk to another. It's main use is in restoring folders/files from floppy disks used as backup for a hard drive partition. The program has many features, such as either adding or replacing files, copying alternately from two drives, etc. When copying, the original time- date stamp of files are retained.

MINI_DOS: A multi-function accessory which does the usual things like copying disks or files, formatting disks, and making folders. One nice feature is allowing you to print a directory of a disk. Of particular note, however, is that it has an excellent undelete function. This enables you to undelete files, including those that were in folders. It is far more effective than UNDELETE, and far easier than trying to do the same thing with Disk Doctor. Highly recommended!

MMCOPY: File Copy Accessory - An accessory specifically designed for easy copying of files from one drive to another. No more rubber banding. Click once on files to be copied, then click on the copy bar, and away they go!

RAMBABY: INTERSECT Ram Baby - An improved version of the popular INTERSECT Ramdisk. It is nearly twice as fast as the original. Drives C through P may be designated for installation. The print spooler is installable in any size. Both the ramdisk and the print spooler can be removed and installed another size. The sounds and warning messages can now be turned off and all settings can be saved to disk.

SEL_PROG: A menu program which allows you to run programs (.PRG, .TOS, and .TTP) just by selecting a number. The program searches a disk or hard drive partition, including looking inside folders, for up to 26 programs. This program has been installed to autorun on this disk through the use of the STARTGEM program. When you leave a program, you are returned to the menu. A "Q" selection allows you to exit the program and go to the desktop.

DISK 207 - UTILITY DISK

Sticker III: Disk Labeling Utility: Unquestionably one of the finest 3 1/2" disk labeling programs around. It features two sets of icons which can be placed on the label. One of these lets you identify the disk as an Atari TOS disk, and IBM disk, a Macintosh disk, etc. The other lets you put another icon on the label identifying whether it is a game disk, a graphics disk, etc. You can choose from the files listed in a window which ones you want to show on the label. This program is entirely unique, to the best of my knowledge, in that it is the only one which

allows you to click on a line and then type in what you want. You are not, therefore, restricted to just file names. Now for the bad news. The program runs on *monochrome monitors only*. This is one of the few programs which can't be fooled by the monochrome emulator.

DISK 208 - EDUCATIONAL DISK

- CLASS17:** A computerized class roster which provides a record of students and their grades. Among it's other features, it will 1) calculate current or final averages for students, 2) determine the letter grade that corresponds to each student's score, 3) calculate the frequency, mean, variance, and standard deviation for each grade or assignment, 4) let you set the ranges and weights for each grade, and 5) let you set a "curve" and calculate grades accordingly. It is a GEM program with drop-down menus and access to your accessories, and is designed for Epson-compatible printers.
- HYPNOSIS:** A program which lets you display 10 different visual stimuli, 6 of which are with sound. They are designed to bring about a S.H.E. (Slight Hyponotic Experience). Not a substitute for hetro-hypnosis (induction by a trained hypnotist), but is a good start for the S.H.E., and a good way to unwind after a hard day.
- LEXICON:** A combination learning game and database modeled after "flash cards" which will help you brush up on your foreign languages. It presents a word in English, and you must give the meaning in the other language, or it can give you the foreign word, and you must type in the English meaning. Two starter files of 100 entries each, one for French and one for Italian are included.
- LIFEWIND:** Life Expectancy Calculation - Developed from an insurance company's questionnaire, the program asks you numerous questions and then calculates your life expectancy based upon your answers.
- QZMKR20:** A multiple-choice quizmaker. You can choose between being quized in a random or sequential manner. The program allows you to print out all the questions in a quiz file, or to print out the questions along with your answers as you progress through a quiz. Data Files are limited to 999 questions per file. The program is in GFA Basic, and the GFA runtime program is included.
- VITAMIN:** Your Personal Vitamin Profile - A program which asks you numerous questions about your physical condition and lifestyle. After each group of questions, it advises you which foods to eat to obtain the vitamins you need.

Disk 209 - GAME

- BOLO:** A Breakout-type arcade game. It is in black and white, but it will run on color or monochrome monitors. In fact, you can change types of monitors in the middle of a game. You need 1 mb of ram to have musical accompaniment for your intro, however. The game has 50 levels of play.
- MASTMIND:** Master Mind - A game in which you must guess the letters which make up a word which the

computer has in mind.

DISK 210 - GAME DISK (SSE)

Statistically Accurate Baseball Version 2.0 - A baseball fans baseball game which allows you to see how much of a difference as the team manager you can make in the team's standing by the end of the season. You can do this by doing such things as putting in the right pinch hitter or calling for the right relief pitcher. Data for the 1986 Mets, the 1984 Cubs, the 1970 Reds, and the 1962 Giants are included. This is a shareware program. You should look closely at the shareware offer in the documentation file, as many extras are available for your shareware contribution, such as a statistics program and a drafting program for making up your own teams. Data files for additional teams are also available. The author will even make up data files for additional teams that you request. The program runs on color or monochrome monitors, and on the old or Mega ROMS.

ADDITION TO THE SUPPLEMENTARY LIBRARY

SPC 001 SPECTRUM PICTURE DISK (DSE) A collection of 18 Spectrum pictures compiled by Chuck Dobbs, a MilAtari member. A picture viewing program is included. Pictures include several each from Star Trek and Star Wars, as well as a still life, a clown's face, and a cheetah's face.

Other News

Now that the elections are over, I can tell you that one of the "retiring" members of the Board of Directors, our Treasurer Carl Verbanac, will not be fading off into the sunset. I have been able to convince him that, due to his long-standing interest in public domain software, he would be perfect as a replacement for Michelle as my assistant. Look for him to be giving the demos of the PD disks at the next meeting.

I think that it also timely to "officially" designate two people who have been holding positions on a de facto basis for several months. Bob Bobinger functions as an assistant in the capacity of Chief, ST Download Crew. Anyone interested in joining the Download Crew should contact him directly.

Linda Heinrich will be taking over control of the ST Supplementary Library. Starting in May, disks from the Supplementary Library will need to be ordered from her in advance, either by placing an order in the Library Lounge room on the BBS, ordering disks at a meeting to be delivered at the next meeting, or by contacting her directly between the meetings. Many exciting things will be happening in her area in the near future. A number of song disks will be added, disks of .IMG files, and a biblical database program involving the King James Version of the Bible. The scope of this portion of the library has become such that we will no longer be able to just make up these disks on the spot at the meetings. As an example, the Bible data files total approximately 2.5 mb *arced*. We estimate that it will take up about 8 double-sided disks in extended format. If a couple of people ordered this at the same meeting, Linda would have to spend the entire meeting copying just those disks. I'm sure all of you will be able to adjust to the new system in this area and will increasingly see the necessity for the change at the Supplementary Library continues to grow at an accelerated pace.

8-Bit PD Update

I regret to inform you that at the time of this writing I do not have any disks compiled for the month of April due to lack contributions, and time. I put as much of my free time, which is not all that much to begin with, as possible into the collecting and compiling of public domain software for the club.

So far my only sources have been local bulletin boards and believe me, downloading takes a lot of time. By the time the April meeting gets under way, I should have something for you. Also since we sold out of all the copies of the March disks at the last meeting, for those of you who wanted them, there will be copies available.

Bob Marsolek,
8-Bit PD Librarian

* * *

8-Bit SIG for May

Navigating The MilAtari Bulletin Board

Have you ever been fearful of getting logged on to the Milatari BBS? Have you kind of laid back while on the BBS because you weren't quite sure what you were doing? Then the May 8-bit SIG is where you should be at.

We will be on line with the BBS and running through all the operations. We will be happy to answer all your questions concerning getting around our wonderful bulletin board.

As always we will be open to other areas of discussion on the 8-Bit machines. So don't feel shy about asking. Remember, the only dumb question is the one you don't ask.

* * *

ST SIGs for May

#1: ST Beginners SIG

Questions and answers for newcomers to the ST.

Conducted by Tom Bardenwerper

#2: "C" Language Programming

Featuring: Mark Williams C

Conducted by Jeffrey Davis

Special Interest Groups, or SIGs, are classes that are held in separate rooms after the main club meeting. SIGs are conducted by members and feature a popular topic of interest.

This is a place where members can learn more about the covered topic in a semi-formal classroom setting. Questions can be answered, and programs are usually demonstrated. These SIGs are free, and all members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

If there is a topic you would like covered, please let the Executive Board know, as we are always working to improve our club and help our members in every way we can.

* * *

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